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TESTIMONY

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Raised Bill 277, An Act Establishing a Council to Promote Collaboration Between Local Health Departments and the Department of Public Health

March 7, 2012

To Senators Gerritano, Representative Ritter and members
of the Public Health Committee:

The Board of Health of the Central Connecticut Health District (CCHD) submits this testimony in support of Raised Bill 277. We are a 4-town regional public health department serving nearly 97,000 people in our member towns of Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield.

We support the concept of this bill. We understand that it attempts to make the decision-making process at the state level in Connecticut more transparent, fairer and more efficient by bringing state and local public health officials together to make decisions on public health funding, planning for public health, and policy-making.

However, we ask that representation from the local level not be limited to local directors of health, but that at least one member of a local board of health – from either a municipal board or a health district board of health -- be appointed.

Currently there are 38 local boards of health in Connecticut. 17 of Connecticut's cities and towns have their own municipal boards of health. The municipal boards make recommendations to their directors of health on public health programs, planning and the annual budget for their local health department; recommend health policies that serve the public's interest; and advocate for the public's health in the city or town of jurisdiction.

"Public health: prevent, promote, protect"

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March 7, 2012
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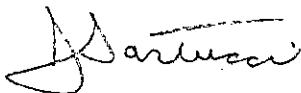
Further, there are currently 21 health districts – regional health departments – serving 115 cities and towns in the state and each has a governing board of health. Board members are appointed by the member towns of the health district.

District health departments, such as our own, are one of the oldest and most successful examples of regionalization in Connecticut. Each health district serves between 2 to 18 cities. Our health districts are funded by municipal, state and federal funds.

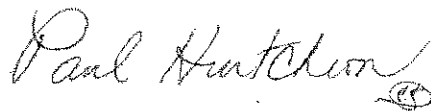
As district boards of health we hire our directors of health, establish the budgets and determine policy direction for our health departments. We are accountable to our member towns for funds received and services delivered and for our policy and fiscal decisions. We are a critical link in what makes public health work locally and therefore need to be represented at the table when public health policy and funding decisions are made.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and our recommendation for board of health representation on this proposed council

Sincerely,



Judith A. Sartucci, M.S.N., R.N.
Chairman, Board of Health



Paul Hutcheon, M.P.H., R.S.
District Director of Health

Cc: State Sen. Paul Doyle
State Sen. John Fonfara
State Rep. Catherine Abercrombie
State Rep. Joseph Aresimowicz
State Rep. Anthony Guerrera
State Rep. Russ Morin
State Rep. Sandy Nafis
State Rep. Tim O'Brien